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**SYSTEM AND PRACTICAL GUIDE
TO SELF-DEFENSE
IN AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR**

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Introduction

Today, the world is different, changed, dynamically developing in every aspect, and the modern person has a wide horizon of opportunities in front of him in terms of having access to diverse and thematic information, communicating freely, getting to know new worlds and cultures , to have fun while reading and spending free time in front of the smartphone, tablet or laptop. All this becomes possible and accessible thanks to the processes of globalization, the development of technology and the daily growing role and influence of the Internet.

The high-tech environment in which we all live and use its resources on a daily basis to access information content that suits our interests, promote it, share it, like it or reject it, as well as easily shop, pay and have fun has both positive sides as well as negative impacts. Namely, the latter have an impact on increasing the deficit of human communication between adolescents, that leads to alienation, lack of empathy and understanding of the other and it begins to limit the imagination and creative impulses of the personality. At the same time, the processes of degradation and questioning of moral values in society are observed, as commercialism and the ever-increasing orientation of modern man towards the material have a dominant meaning. Thus, all of us in the 20th century find ourselves in a situation of information abundance and everyday life made easier by technology, but deprived of the spontaneity of meeting with friends, of the attention of loved ones, of sharing and experiencing the emotions of others. Loneliness, alienation, tension in relationships, distance from primal values and moral principles, lack of respect for oneself and others increasingly

become a prerequisite for unlocking problematic behavior in a person, aggression being one of its manifestations.

Today, aggressive behavior is perceived as part of life, which is increasingly becoming a norm of social interaction. It is used to impose positions, to change points of view, to coerce, to intimidate, to harm and injure others. Behavioral acts of violence and aggression stand out for their intentionality and are committed both by minors and adults. According to psychologists, early manifestations of problematic behavior, including aggressive behavior on the part of the adolescent, escalate during adolescence and become an indicator of antisocial behavior, which can quickly change and acquire deviant manifestations.

Manifestations of aggression in modern society can appear everywhere, both in the home environment and at school, in the workplace, on the street, in public buildings, etc., and it can be open and hidden and it can be associated with causing of physical harm or psychological and emotional trauma, but always its impact on the personality is toxic and requires recognition in order to find the most appropriate approaches to counteract it.

In this regard, the present guide also aims to clarify the essence of aggressive behavior and present specific approaches to self-defense and countering aggression. The practical guide has an informative nature and is aimed at creating a better understanding of this complex and multifaceted psychological phenomenon, aggression, which often manifests itself in different forms and degrees, starting from minor irritations and reaching serious and destructive actions . This guide attempts to guide the reader in this very painful social and psychological problem, because recognizing aggression in its start is important, as it prevents each of us from becoming its victim.

1. Features of aggression as a psychological and social phenomenon

1.1. Nature of aggression and theoretical models to explain its nature

In general, aggression can be defined as any intentional mental or physical injury to others with the purpose of causing harm, physical pain, mental suffering, humiliation and vilification.

Aggression is also presented as an expression of an individual's weakness, through which various personality deficits such as unresolved problems, fear, concealment of complexes, etc., are compensated.

Aggression is also perceived as a form of behavior of any living human being, which contains aggressive attitudes, aggressive evaluations and aggressive actions, looking for the connection and relationships between them.

In psychology, there are various theories through which the essence of aggression is described and its nature is clarified. The separate theoretical directions describing the specifics of aggression are the theory of drives; frustration theory; social learning theory; sociobiological theory; social attribution theory and an ecological approach. Their specifics are briefly presented in order to better understand the nature of aggression.

Representatives of *the theory of drives* believe that each of them interprets aggressiveness in a different way, but the commonality between the representatives of this scientific direction is that aggressiveness is perceived as a stable characteristic of the individual. It does not arise automatically as an attraction in the body, but is the result of dissatisfaction and ceases its action when the need is satisfied.

Some authors present aggression as an independent attraction to death and destruction. It can be directed outwards and then manifest as hostility, or it can

also be inwards in which case it takes the form of self-punishment for the individual. Others see man and animal as an aggressively energized system, speaking of an aggressive drive gene.

The frustration theory emphasizes the presence of frustration, which provokes the corresponding aggressive behavior in the personality. Frustrates can be different as physical - presence of obstacles; biological - presence of disease; psychological - presence of fear; sociocultural - related to certain norms and rules. Frustrates can also be the result of certain unsatisfied needs, etc. Mainly, the representatives of the Chicago school of psychology examine the interaction between aggression and frustration, as they consider that an attraction arises in the human body, which is the result of an emerging frustration, and accept aggressive behavior as a consequence, not as a cause of deviations in human behavior.

Social learning theory emphasizes the interaction of cognitive factors and environmental factors that provoke certain behavior. Typical representatives of this theory view aggression through a different prism. They step on the understanding that aggression is a learned form of social behavior that appears in most cases as a result of some kind of frustration. For them, anger is seen as a necessary but not sufficient condition for aggressiveness. Insult and threat, as well as all other negative emotions can provoke aggressive manifestations in the personality. As for punishment, it can strengthen, weaken, and also not change aggressiveness.

Another representative of the theory of social learning proves that aggressiveness is not always related to frustration and introduces two intermediate variables, which are: anger - an inciting element and trigger

reaction- a key feature. According to him, in order to be aggressive, it is not enough to have anger, there must also be a source of the anger.

In the 60s of the 20th century, *the sociobiological theory appeared* , which offered another prism for examining human aggressiveness. It is based on the understanding that human social behavior has a biological basis. Aggression is seen as a mechanism that ensures the species' ability to survive and is part of the inherited biological nature of man.

Human aggression is also the subject of research from the theory of *social attribution* , emphasizing the aggressive behavior of the other party as a reason for retaliating aggression and social attribution, which acts on a par with the law of cognitive balance between the attributed motives of the offending party. Behavior and the standard norms of fairness that dominate the social culture. One of the representatives of this theory states that there is a negative correlation between empathy and aggressiveness, stating that the more empathy a person is capable of, the less likely he is to resort to aggressive actions towards other people, and vice versa, low levels of empathy in the personality they presuppose more aggressive manifestations.

Aggression and aggressiveness are also the subject of research by *depth psychology* , whose main representative is a famous Viennese psychologist, who points out that immediately after birth, the child expresses an attitude that is defined as hostile, but helpful in achieving the satisfaction of its needs , for example, shouting and small bites, falling to the ground, etc. The author is of the opinion that aggressive behavior has no reasons to be innate, intrinsically biological, but becomes comprehensible only as a symptom of mental abnormalities of the personality.

In recent years, *the ecological model* for explaining aggression and violence has also gained popularity, which is related to modern theories that have a more sociological nature and try to explain aggressive actions through the social preconditions created in society for them. A leading emphasis of the ecological model is the interaction of various individual and contextual factors that influence human behavior. In the model, five levels of influencing factors stand out, namely:

- First level factors that refer to the personal characteristics of each child, his character and biography. For example, impulsivity, low educational level, increased levels of anger, nervousness, grumpiness , etc. can favor aggressive manifestations.
- The second level of factors is related to the person's social relationships with family, friends, classmates, etc. and the manifestations of violence in these relationships.
- The third level of factors, in the ecological model, is that of the community in which the person is included with its social relations - school, workplace, neighborhood relations. The aim is to identify those characteristics of these relationships that give rise to violence.
- The fourth and fifth levels of the ecological model relate to the larger social factors influencing the level of violence. This includes prerequisites related to a relevant climate of violence, those that weaken prohibitions and restrictions against violence, create tensions, contradictions, conflicts between different segments of society. Such factors include, for example, cultural norms that support violence as an acceptable way to resolve conflicts; norms that imply male dominance over women and children, etc.

1.2. Reasons for aggressive behavior

The first basic factor that can provoke aggression and aggressive behavior is *the family*. It can have an impact on the personality even while he is a child in different ways and become a prerequisite for provoking aggression. One way of doing this is by tolerating and accepting the child's "bad behavior" at home as natural. Of course, during the various stages of their development, it is normal for children to have their violent reactions, to oppose and confront their parents, because no matter how correctly children are brought up, they cannot be deprived of the right to express their emotions, to enter in conflicts, to resist, but a clear boundary must always be set, to follow certain rules of behavior and upbringing, which, however, are realistic and tailored to the real needs of the child, his age, personality and the overall family dynamics. The child's lack of respect for the parent, who is an authority, is transferred to the teacher at school.

Conflicts in the family can also have an impact on the adolescent personality, not only when they are overt, i.e. parents fight, rudely, sometimes even to the point of beating, but also when they are hidden and manifest in covert tension between family members, hidden anger, pain, hatred. Unresolved and unprocessed emotions of some family members can be expressed by the child, and sometimes this can also become a pattern of behavior by the adolescent. Also, a family environment that is devoid of understanding and empathy for family members, showing empathy and respect for their feelings, can cause alienation and misunderstanding between them, which can become a reason for aggression. Of course, factors such as the lack of love in the family, sufficient affection and attention to the child and his problems and excitement, parents' reluctance to recognize the child's successes and treat failures with understanding and support, affect on his self-esteem, which is low, cause the

child a feeling of hopelessness, but also become the cause of problems in interpersonal communication, as it is difficult for him to make and maintain friends friendships, prefers to isolate and close to the surrounding world, can distance himself from his academic duties, and sometimes show anger and hostility towards teachers and classmates, and later, as an adolescent and an already mature person, show a tendency to aggression.

School is another factor that can provoke aggressive behavior and, along with its socializing and educational role of the young generation, it can also be a bearer of risks for adolescents, who in one way or another reflect on it and express themselves, through their actions, actions and behaviors that are aggressive. Among the risk factors in the school environment, we can point out the excessive workload and difficult tasks that are set for children, which causes depression and an aggressive reaction on their part. Also, factors such as difficult adaptation of the student, impaired communication with teachers, misunderstanding with classmates, the unspoken abandonment of the educational role of the teacher, the boring presentation of educational material, as well as the lack of interest of children in school work should not be ignored.

The reference environment is also a factor that can encourage acts of aggression. It is an environment that is different from the family and includes friends and a close circle of peers or other adults with whom the individual chooses to associate. From the point of view of psychology, the informal group of friends and peers, which is united by common interests and leisure activities, represents a territory of mutual "contagion" with behavioral stereotypes. The models of behavior and values that are followed in the reference/friendly environment represent a very strong factor for the appearance and consolidation of deviations in the personality's behavior. Namely, in this friendly environment,

violence and aggression can be used daily to resolve conflicts and create respect, and this model is recreated by the individual, in his environment - family, school, office, etc. The friendly environment that a person chooses has a strong impact on his behavior because it is his choice and he receives its messages immediately and reproduces the behavior to which it pushes him more readily. Various studies conducted by psychologists and educators confirm the strong relationship that exists between friendship environment and personality behavior, clearly showing how children who are in friendship groups where alcohol, drugs, violence and aggression are used become much more susceptible and capable of unacceptable behavior at school, and sometimes can even reach antisocial manifestations.

Of course, among the groups of factors affecting the manifestations of aggressive behavior, *society and the processes and phenomena taking place in it should not be neglected*. Today, the younger generation and society as a whole live in a time in which there is a permanent trend of collapse of traditional values and moral norms that regulate relations between people, with individualism, selfishness, greed, hypocrisy, meanness, corruption, materiality, soullessness, etc.. The globalizing world also contributes to the fading of the idea of patriotism and nationalism and national nihilism prevails among society. It cannot be ignored that there is also a breakdown in the moral values and norms regulating the relations between young men and women, marriage and the family, with frivolity increasingly dominating the sexual life of young people, neglecting the role of the family and increasing commercialization of marriage. In addition, education and knowledge are not perceived as values and an important resource for human prosperity and development. All these features of

the modern living environment put modern individuals in a situation of confusion, difficult adaptation and finding the right path.

Attention should also be paid to some *personality traits* of people prone to aggression, since each person has an individual character and traits, and you can always find talkative extroverts and quiet introverts, observant and careful people, impulsive and outbursts, shy, brave and many more. However, people who stand out for their impulsiveness have a low tolerance for frustration, have difficulty managing their emotional world, stressful situations cause great tension in them, both in everyday life and in an overall life plan, they are prone to aggression. In terms of gender, boys and girls/men and women are increasingly equated today when it comes to problem behaviour. Both sexes increasingly resort to violence and aggression to resolve disputes with classmates, colleagues, partners, friends, etc. equally tend to violate good norms of behavior and behave defiantly. Misconceptions and hostility towards the environment can also provoke defiant behavior to gain attention or to express anger and disagreement.

1.3. Types and forms of aggression

Aggression can manifest itself in different forms and types, therefore the most common manifestations of it in practice will be considered. For this purpose, several classification criteria are used, namely:

- Aggression, according to how it is expressed

Physical, verbal and indirect aggression can be distinguished in this category.

- Physical aggression - it is defined as a type of hostile reaction, in which approaches are used to affect and cause harm, such as hitting, biting,

pushing, kicking, tripping, and other methods through which physical violence can be caused.

- Verbal aggression - it is distinguished by the fact that it uses words and expressions that aim to devalue the other, such as insults, threats, swearing and other verbal forms that insult, hurt and denigrate the person.
- Indirect aggression - in it manipulation and scheming are leading, through which the aim is to hurt the person by means of spreading lies, gossip, slander and secrets about him.

- Aggression, according to incitement and direction

Psychologists include hostile and instrumental aggression in this category.

- Hostile (impulsive) aggression – it is aimed at a certain object and aims to cause it harm. An outburst of anger can be directed at both living subjects and objects. Also, it can manifest itself both towards the source of the frustration and towards an entity unrelated to the state of the individual exhibiting a hostile attitude. According to psychologists, impulsive aggression, which manifests itself mostly as anger, may be caused by feelings of shame or guilt,
- Instrumental aggression - here aggression is used as a tool for coercion and achieving certain goals. It is used in education as a form of punishment, and it can also be used as a form of blackmail.

- Active and passive aggression

Active aggression, which is also called open aggression, is distinguished by the fact that it is acted on clearly and manifests itself as an open conflict, in which a point of view or position can be defended or the boundaries of others can be attacked. Passive aggression is different and involves avoiding direct confrontation and concealing negative emotions. Covert, passive aggression

relies on indirect harm, using veiled insults, sarcasm, feigned indifference, etc. In most cases, people choosing passive, hidden aggression run away from open conflict, using irony, sarcasm, insults, indirect expression of disobedience, hostility, spreading gossip, etc. Examples of passive aggression include being silent and not answering questions, sulking and whining, not accidentally forgetting something that needs to be done, procrastinating on tasks, sabotage, etc.

- Autoaggression

It is a type of disruptive behavior that is directed at one's own personality and can include all forms of self-harm, substance abuse, suicide attempts, etc. The reasons for directing a person's anger inward towards oneself can be sought in the manifestations of various psychological problems such as depressions, neuroses, and other untreated long-term psychological problems, as well as destructive emotions such as feelings of inferiority, indecisiveness, weak will, deep introversion and etc. Psychologists explain auto-aggression with the feeling of existential emptiness, alienation and the feeling of abandonment, with anger and dissatisfaction.

- Cyberaggression/Cyberbullying

The global network, along with the opportunities it provides for access to information and communication, also becomes a prerequisite for the appearance of cyber-aggression, also called cyber-bullying, "cyber-violence", "digital harassment", "online harassment", etc. The essence of this new phenomenon for modern society is well defined by UNICEF, because according to various studies, children and adolescents are the most frequent victims of bullying in cyberspace. UNICEF defines it as bullying that takes place through digital

technologies and is perceived as an extension of social (indirect) bullying and aims to hurt and humiliate the person it is aimed at. Aggression in the virtual space is also considered as the deliberate, persistent and malicious use of words, expressions, photos, videos in the cyber space with the aim of harming the well-being of the person.

In practice , aggression in cyberspace manifests itself in two main forms, which are:

- Cyber-aggression, which is carried out through mobile phones, in which threats or hints, insults, blackmail, mockery are made in the form of calls or sending SMS. Also, it can manifest itself as sending other people's mobile numbers without the knowledge of their owner, as well as taking videos and photos with content that damages the prestige of the person.
- Cyber-aggression, which is carried out through the Internet space, and its typical forms are related to the sending of any messages with threats, insults, mockery, etc., whether through social networks, chats, forums, e-mail or online games. Identity theft is also a form of cyberbullying, including stealing passwords or hacking accounts (unauthorized access to someone else's Facebook account or email). Posting photos or videos online that demean a person in any way is also a form of cyberbullying. This type also includes sending viruses or junk files, as well as spam emails.

Victims of cyberbullying, especially when it involves children, avoid sharing with parents and loved ones due to fear or shame. They can endure humiliation, insults and attacks against themselves for a long period of time.

2. Recognizing aggressive behavior and its consequences

2.1. Recognition of aggression in its various manifestations

Manifestations of aggression can be a sign of the presence of serious psychological and emotional problems that require attention and understanding. Early detection of signs of aggression is essential in order to counteract the problem, to take timely measures to overcome it, and also to prevent its deepening. Among the most common signs that lead to the conclusion that the behavior can be interpreted as aggressive are:

- Use of offensive words and qualifications to a third person in verbal communication with other people - children, parents, friends, colleagues, etc. Ironic innuendo, sarcasm, and mockery can be used along with insults.
- Kicking, shoving, hitting and throwing objects in a tense and angry situation also indicate a problem with emotion management.
- Constant irritability and outbursts, which are manifested in frequent anger even for the most insignificant things, as a result of which the person may show hysterical manifestations and frustration, and gives a clear signal of a lack of effective management of emotions.
- Refusal to follow rules and respect boundaries in order to achieve a certain goal or realize an intention is also perceived as a signal of a behavioral problem.
- Difficulties in social interaction, manifested by isolation , difficulty forming friendships, frequent arguments, difficulty understanding social norms and ways to peacefully resolve conflict situations.
- Manifestations of emotional instability associated with rapid and frequent mood swings and switching from joy to anger within minutes. The rapid

alternation of emotions is perceived as a signal of internal struggles and the possibility of controlling emotions.

- Strong dependence on technology and content that emphasizes aggression and violence such as movies or videos, aggressive video games, etc. This content becomes a pattern of behavior for the individual.
- Manifestations of self-destructive behavior that can manifest in various ways of self-harming the person and should be taken as a signal of an internal problem and a need for support.
- Manifestations of malicious jokes, poor performance of assigned tasks, silence that instills uncertainty, transfer of blame, etc. are signals of passive-aggressive behavior.

Better recognition of aggressive behavior requires knowing the motives that provoke it.

Often times in practice, the aggressors are insecure people who are afraid, have caused emotional traumas, the family rejects them and does not show understanding towards them. Also, aggressive individuals sometimes show low results in academic work and in the workplace and prefer to attract attention through their aggressive actions rather than their knowledge, skills and competences.

Aggression is also used by people who have a strong need for power and dominance. They like to impose themselves on others, whom they define as weaker than them, and are hostile to the world around them. Often times they consider the victim to challenge and hinder them and try to show their superiority over her. They don't care about the feelings of those they hurt with their behavior and may even get satisfaction from having hurt someone. They have high levels of self-esteem but low levels of anxiety.

A motive for the manifestation of aggressive behavior can also be the individual's desire to attract attention to himself and be the center of attention. Another important reason pushing towards unacceptable and aggressive behavior is that the person may feel a sense of inferiority regarding his achievements, does not receive recognition from his surroundings, wants to influence others by force. In this situation, these individuals often resort to blackmail, harassment, challenging the authority of authorities and opposing order and rules.

Another motive for aggressive behavior may be the desire to take revenge for a real, imagined insult to them, or because these persons have not been objectively assessed for their skills and abilities. In most cases, these people are hostile and show verbal or physical aggression. Aggression can also be motivated by the fact that the person wants to avoid failure, so he chooses to be passive and remain isolated.

2.2. Consequences of aggression on the personality

Aggressive behavior is always in conflict with established rules and norms in society, as its consequences reflect not only on the victim of aggression, but also on the personality of the aggressor. In general, the consequences for the person can be presented in two main categories, which are psychological and physical.

➤ Psychological effects

They often manifest as different types of behaviors that can help the person to adapt, but can also cause pathologies or deepen the problem. They include:

- Denial and repression - this behavior manifests as a desire to forget the violence and what happened, which allows the person to survive by not living

continuously with the unpleasant experience. If forgetting continues for a long time, it can make it difficult to process negative emotions and deepen the isolation of the person.

- Deviant behavior - memories or emotions of shame, anger, pain that cannot be expressed through words find an outlet in behavior. Such an expression is sudden angry outbursts, self-injurious behavior, etc.

- Justification of the aggressor - the person is constantly looking for ways to justify the aggressive behavior and also his own resignation in the situation. The victim's desire is to change his own consciousness and memories, since reality cannot be changed.

- Willingness to help others - this is an effective approach that helps the victim overcome the trauma. In one case, the person, through his behavior, can seek attention and help, and in the other, realizing his problems, he wants to help other people with similar fates.

- Identification with the aggressor – this is an approach where the victim of aggression begins to think of herself as being just as powerful as the aggressor. In this way , she saves herself because she feels like a person who has the power and doesn't need to be afraid anymore.

- Self-blame - this is the most characteristic reaction for the victim of violence, as it is associated with self-punishing behavior, high demands on oneself, self-humiliation, etc. A permanent sense of guilt predetermines the further behavior of the person. Unconsciously, he begins to act from the position of a person who deserves to be beaten. Also, tolerance of violence can make a victim of childhood abuse a potential victim of aggression in adulthood.

It is important to keep in mind that whenever a person is a victim of aggression, he becomes depressed and irritable, bitter, bored and closed in on

himself. He may begin to exhibit nervous outbursts, anger and irritability towards his loved ones and friends, and the feeling of helplessness may be so strong as to provoke self-destructive actions.

➤ Physical effects

The physical effects are reduced to the fact that the victim of bullying feels tired, has sleep disturbances, and may also experience various physical pains such as headaches, fatigue, dizziness, etc.

3. Strategies for countering and coping with aggressive behavior

3.1. Anger control

In a situation of aggression, no matter in what form it manifests itself, anger stands out as the main driving force that makes a person act in one way or another. In itself, anger is a normal reaction to what is happening, but it needs to be expressed in a way that does not cause damage and does not harm others. Therefore, understanding and mastering anger is an appropriate technique that can assist in creating a more fulfilling life, as well as building more peaceful relationships with those around us. In this regard, several techniques can be undertaken to facilitate the process of mastering and controlling anger, namely:

➤ Identifying the emotions behind anger

In a situation of intense anger, it is important to focus one's thoughts on understanding what is behind it. It can be a state of intense anger about something, being angry, or using anger to cover up another emotion such as disappointment, insult, shame, insecurity, vulnerability, pain.

➤ Spotting the warning signs of anger

When a person is angry, usually on a physical level, the body reacts, so it is important to pay attention to signals sent by the body such as clenching the

fists and jaw, tightening the stomach, rapid breathing, rapid heart rate, headache, negative thoughts, tension in the shoulders and etc. Discovering the signs of the body that we associate with anger helps to detect it earlier and take measures to manage it.

➤ Applying anger management techniques

An effective technique for calming anger is to breathe in and out smoothly while counting to five or ten. It also reflects well on movement and walking, which help release tension and analyze the situation. A change in the way of thinking is also defined as a good approach, since a philosophical perception of things and rising above the problem helps to approach the concrete situation in a more balanced way. It is also important to apply the techniques of listening and good communication, as well as waiting, so that time can pass and the problem that has arisen can be analyzed calmly.

3.2. Aggression management

In practice, the management of aggression comes down to the application of a complex approach, which relies on the joint application of preventive tools and intervention strategies. In this regard, several effective techniques can be mentioned:

➤ Cognitive behavioral therapy

At the heart of cognitive-behavioral therapy is the idea that the way we think affects how we feel and what behavior we have. Therefore, the main goal of this type of therapy is aimed at helping to change negative thought and behavioral patterns and from there to change the way we feel in different situations. Accordingly, realistic assessment and change in thinking leads to changes in mood and behavior. Cognitive-behavioral therapy is perceived as one

of the effective methods by which aggression can be effectively managed. It helps people learn to recognize and change negative thought patterns that underlie and encourage aggressive behavior. Cognitive-behavioral therapy is also a method that provides knowledge and skills on how a person can most effectively cope with stress and improve their emotional state.

➤ Stress management

Stress management rests on the application of relaxation techniques, the main purpose of which is to relieve tension, reduce anxiety, increase the degree of self-awareness and the level of individual self-regulation. Also, managing stress leads to improved mood, productivity and emotional stability. Each person can experiment with different stress management techniques, some of the most commonly practiced are:

- Mindfulness Meditation – Meditation helps to reduce anxiety and can be practiced by using various apps or online resources that provide guidance on how to do it, as well as by attending meditation groups.
- Exercise - regular activities such as walking, jogging, cycling, swimming or other sports help release endorphins, which act as natural stress relievers.
- Yoga and Tai Chi - These practices combine physical postures, breathing exercises and meditation to reduce stress and improve flexibility and balance. They are particularly effective for those who prefer a gentler approach to physical activity.
- Time Management Skills - If stress is associated with feeling overwhelmed or stressed, improving your time management skills can be very helpful. This includes learning to prioritize tasks, set realistic goals, and break larger projects into smaller, manageable steps.

- Journaling – writing down your thoughts and feelings can be a therapeutic way to deal with stress as it provides an opportunity to express and process your emotions, which helps to have more clarity and relieve stress.
- Participating in creative activities such as painting, music or crafts is also identified as a workable way of coping with stress.
- Professional help – using a therapist or counselor can also be helpful if the person is unable to cope with the problem on their own.

➤ Family and group therapies

Participating in family and group therapies is also a tool that can be used to manage aggression, especially when it results from dysfunctional family dynamics or social interactions. These forms of therapy provide a safe and supportive environment for recognizing and changing negative behavior patterns. This type of therapy helps to expand a person's boundaries, to deepen his contact with himself by looking at others. Through these therapies, it becomes possible to expand the understanding of both the positive and negative qualities of each participant and to break one's own ideas and limits.

➤ Improving communication skills

Effective communication is the basis for achieving consensus and overcoming aggressive situations. The basis of achieving effective communication are the skills of active listening, honest and open presentation of points of view, empathy, constructive feedback.

3.3. Counteracting passive-aggressive behavior

Passive-aggressive behavior can have destructive consequences, but the reality is that any of us can exhibit such behavior and it becomes a daily occurrence. It can have consequences on relationships between people - work, family, love,

friendship, etc. The reasons for its spread can be related to upbringing and the influence of the environment, which necessitates suppression and neglect of emotions. The situation can also be a factor promoting passive-aggressive behavior, namely when a person finds himself in a situation where it is unacceptable to show that he is angry. This can be in the workplace, in the family and the choice is to cover up the real reaction to the situation. Passive aggression can also be the result of taking the easy way out, i.e. one finds it difficult to be emotionally open and assertive and chooses to be passive and not directly confront the source of one's anger.

In this regard, it is important not only to recognize passive-aggressive behavior, but also to apply techniques to limit its harmful impact on the individual. These techniques boil down to the following:

- Recognizing passive-aggressive behavior

To recognize passive aggression, it is important to pay attention to the language and the words and expressions used by the other party. In most cases, people who rely on the tools of passive aggression do not enter into a direct confrontation and argument and use expressions like: "Whatever, it doesn't matter.", "You won't understand me anyway," "Okay, we'll do as you want", etc. These expressions aim to create a feeling of inferiority in the other party.

- Restraint

Restraint is one of the most important means of countering the passive aggressor, as one remains calm and does not allow himself to be provoked.

- Saving empathy

Maintaining self-control and carefully considering a response is very important, as it helps to assert one's own line of conduct. In such cases, empathy is not advisable.

➤ Seeking active discussion and unequivocally stating a position

It is important to soberly and skilfully consider the tactics of the opponent in order to counter the provocations he makes. It is also necessary to choose communication strategies in which to look for a win-win option for both parties, since people do not like to be losers from a given situation, so it would be appropriate to satisfy both parties.

Other techniques for counteracting passive-aggressive behavior are:

- Improving self-awareness, which is associated with creating a clear understanding in the person why they are upset or what they are feeling. It is important to pay attention to what is happening while reacting to other people and situations.

- Allowing time to make behavioral changes – recognizing your own behavior is a good first step to changing it, but it is important to allow time for it to happen.

- Self-expression – understanding emotions and expressing feelings appropriately is an important step towards ending passive-aggressive behavior .

3.4. Behavioral models for limiting overt aggression

The main reaction that should be shown in a situation of open aggression is not to react with aggressive means. In case of direct aggression, it is necessary:

- to ensure the safety of others who are part of the environment in which the situation occurs.

- to come into direct contact with the person who shows aggression, avoiding confrontation with him; talk and discuss with him what happened; name the emotions that led to the person's aggressive behavior; the person may be invited to describe the reasons that caused his anxiety and anger.

- actions can be taken to calm the person who shows aggression by using soothing words, behavior, etc., to predispose him and reduce the tension he feels.
- it is necessary to set clear boundaries that should not be violated in communication with the aggressive person.
- personal safety should always be considered when communicating with an aggressive person and in trying to control his behavior.
- if necessary, help can also be sought from a psychologist and psychotherapist, who can assist in the more in-depth study of the factors that provoke aggressive manifestations in the personality, as well as regarding the application of suitable tools to overcome them.

Building practical models for self-defense

How to take care of ourselves?

1. Don't panic, regardless of the situation you're in. ***Keep calm and cool.***
2. Decide on swift and vigorous action.
3. Replace the role of victim with angry and determined behavior.
 - 3.1. Fear is a bad counselor. It leads to passive behavior that puts you in the role of victim. And vice versa - if you replace fear with self-confidence, then you become active and your chances of getting out of the extreme situation increase.
 - 3.2. Only a calm and confident demeanor can respect the attacker. The attacker "feels out" the situation to see if the victim will resist. Unexpected self-defense respects, frightens and confuses him.
 - 3.3. The sooner you resist, the faster you will get out of the situation.
4. If you feel, even intuitively, that there is tension and danger in the surrounding environment, do your best to withdraw from the situation as quickly as possible.

5. When attacked, shout loudly. This cry is a signal that you will fight for your life. It is a warning to the attacker, but it can also attract the attention of other people who can help you.

6. Remove from your behavior any element that speaks of insecurity.

7. Be observant and aware of any change in the people and environment around you.

8. Look people in the eye - this way you will get more information about their intentions.

9. Do more sports, use every time to maintain your physical condition. It makes you more balanced and more confident.

10. Train your gait. Walk with steady, steady steps, head up and shoulders straight.

11. Practice breathing techniques - rapid and shallow breathing prevents you from thinking rationally. Even and calm breathing will help you think clearly and react intelligently even in the most difficult situation.

12. Watch body language – your own and other people's. This way you will be able to change your behavior to speak of strength and confidence.

13. Speak in an even, calm and strong voice.

14. Formulate your requests clearly and specifically, without any requests or questions. The direct way of speaking will help you. To be taken seriously and to sound convincing, your tone needs to be loud and firm.

Remember: *The way you speak is just as important as what you say!*

All means and methods are justified in view of your ability to survive as a strategy for dealing with the challenges of everyday life.

In an aggressive attack, try to escape first. If you fail, immediately start resisting by all means.

3.5 Self-defense techniques for aggressive behavior

The described self-defense techniques are intended for people who may find themselves in an extreme situation in their everyday life and are subject to direct aggression and assault. They can be used without the need for special clothing and physical/sports/training.

SITUATION I

The attacker has grabbed you by the neck with both hands. You have no room to move. He is trying to rob you.

Reaction: Even before he has grabbed you, you try to pull your chin to your body / to prevent him from choking you /. Then deliver a sharp blow with both hands simultaneously in the kidney area. Immediately deliver a second blow with the palms of both hands to the temples. Grab him by the neck and deliver a knee strike to the stomach or groin. Finish it off with an elbow strike to the back.

SITUATION II

The attacker has grabbed you from behind through both of your arms. He grips you tightly.

Reaction: Step on the opponent with the heel of your shoe in the lower part of the foot or kick him with the heel in the knee. Immediately take a deep breath, quickly let it out while simultaneously squatting and stretching both arms forward. Bring the leg you used to hit the opponent to the side and deliver an elbow strike to the stomach. Finish it off with a saber strike with your hand to the groin.

SITUATION III

Position: The attacker has you pinned with both hands. You have limited space to move.

Reaction: Relax into his arms and hug him around the waist. Transfer your weight onto your right leg and hit him hard in the groin with your left knee. Quickly step back. Deliver a blow to the opponent's chin with your left elbow up, placing your fist next to your left ear.

SITUATION IV

Situation: The attacker tries to choke you from behind with his forearm.

Reaction: Even before he has caught you, you try to pull your chin to your body /to prevent him from choking you/. Step on the opponent with the heel of your shoe in the lower part of your foot or kick him in the knee with your heel. Strike him with an elbow in the stomach and finish him off with a saber blow in the groin.

Conclusion

Aggression and aggressive behavior are a phenomenon that has a dominant importance and influence in modern society. In order to effectively counteract it, it is necessary to recognize this behavior in time, to identify the reasons that provoke it, and also to choose those strategies and techniques for counteraction that, on the one hand, have a preventive nature, and on the other hand, will help people overcome their aggressive tendencies and improve their quality of life. Aggression management skills contribute to constructive conflict resolution and consensus building. Self-soothing techniques, improved communication skills, openness, and respect for others are just a few of the tools that can help find peaceful and constructive solutions.